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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 22, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 22, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

#### POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM / MILLIYET / HURRIYET / YENI SAFAK / EVRENSEL / SABAH: The trial of four special operations team members, who were allegedly involved in the deaths of Ugur and Ahmet Kaymaz in November, started at the Mardin 2nd Penalty Court. Considering the security reasons and because of the fact that they are on duty, since as they have been reassigned to their posts in other cities, the team members stated that they would not attend the court hearing and requested from the court to submit their statements in writing. The security of the court hearing was maintained by 2000 police officers. Some of the Turkish Parliament's Human Rights Commission members, the leader of DEHAP, Tuncer Bakirhan, European Parliament member, Feleknaz Uca, and NGOs were present to watch the proceedings as well. A 500-person group gathered in front of the Office of the Governor and shouted slogans in favor of Abdullah Ocalan.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The tent-settlements (or -camps) that were set up after the earthquake hit Hakkari will be abolished and the tents will be reestablished at individual locations close to the buildings in which people face the severe risk of collapse. Removal of the tent camps disturbed some of the tent dwellers, who are especially fearful of the cracks caused by the quake in their houses. However, other people experiencing severe building damage welcomed the idea.

BOLGE / OZGUR GUNDEM: The intensity of the hostilities in Mersin have reportedly not decreased since Umit Gonultas was shot dead during the Feb 15 demonstrations that aimed to protest Ocalan's capture by Turkey six years ago. The riot police have blockaded various streets in the province since then, (according to Ozgur Gundem). DEHAP Provincial Youth Branches protested in front of the Mersin Department of Justice the shooting of Gonultas and demanded that the killers of Gonultas be found.

RADIKAL: The number of patients with pneumonia and bronchitis has increased by 120 percent in Tatvan in Bitlis province. The Chief Doctor of Tatvan Birth and Child Care Hospital reported that between January 1 and February 10, 2,773 children with respiratory inflammations, pneumonia and bronchitis have been brought to the hospital for treatment.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. MILLIYET / EKSPRES / BOLGE / ZAMAN / TURKIYE: Adana Chamber of Commerce will open the East Mediterranean Foreign Trade Center today to foster the international relationships of Cukurova Region's SMEs. Among the undertakings of the Center are providing advisory services to the SMEs with regard to national and international fairs and promoting the export opportunities available within the (Cukurova) region.

2. SABAH (GUNEY): Saban Bas, Chairperson of the Adana Chamber of Commerce, expressed that the 1st Economic Cooperation Forum of Adana turned out to be a very fruitful event. According to Bas, the Forum's achievements beneficial to Adana's economy were the business ties established with the participant foreign businessmen, which are worth billions of dollars and the opportunity to discuss the economic problems of Adana with PM Erdogan.

3. SABAH (GUNEY): During their meeting with PM Erdogan and the State Minister Kursat Tuzmen, Abdulkadir Konukoglu, Assembly Chairperson of the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry, Nejat Kocer, Chairperson of the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry and Mehmet Aslan, Chairperson of the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce, submitted an alternative incentive program scheme to Erdogan. Mehmet Aslan reportedly pointed out to the grave fact that entrepreneurs are withdrawing their investment plans in Gaziantep and being attracted by Syria, such as (opportunities in) Aleppo.

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